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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000133

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SUBJECT: S/I SATTERFIELD AND FM ZEBARI DISCUSS THE UPCOMING DIPLOMATIC AGENDA FOR EARLY 2008

REF: BAGHDAD 118

Classified By: Political Counselor Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Summary. S/I Satterfield, White House Senior Director for Iraq and Afghanistan Brett McGurk, and PolCouns discussed with Hoshyar Zebari on January 16 the recent 3 plus 1 meetings earlier in the week and plans for negotiating the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Zebari said the composition of the team is still being decided, but expects it will be comprised of a political/leadership committee, a steering committee, and a technical team. Zebari also talked about his recent travels to Egypt, commenting that President Mubarak is open to exploring the issue of reopening an embassy in Iraq. There are tentative plans for an expanded Neighbors Ministerial in Kuwait in April, with working group and preparatory meetings scheduled as early as February. Zebari said the Turks recently sent a dipnote regarding their concerns that wounded PKK members are being treated in Irbil hospitals, and relayed to Satterfield he is investigating the issue. Zebari said the GOI is ready to transfer \$8 million in funding to support Iraqi refugees in Jordan via the GOJ to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) shortly. Zebari told Satterfield "ignoring" Iran right now is the best posture given the lack of response from Iran on joint talks. End summary.

3 PLUS 1 MEETING AND SOFA NEGOTIATIONS

¶12. (C) S/I Satterfield asked Hoshyar Zebari in a meeting January 16 the next steps discussed in the 3 plus 1 meeting (ref A) earlier in the week, particularly on moving forward on the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Hoshyar responded that this issue was discussed in the 3 plus 1 meeting, commenting the composition of the SOFA delegation will be discussed in the near future. He commented, however, the plan is to have three tiers. First there would be a leadership committee or executive team. Then a steering committee, which includes ministries of Defense, Interior, Foreign Affairs, and others. A technical team, Zebari added, would be led by one of the GOI's top legal advisors. Zebari promised to provide the USG with a list as these details are finalized. Zebari also promised to provide the USG with a single GOI point of contact for the negotiations, which is still under discussion. Satterfield told Zebari Ambassador Crocker will be the USG main point of contact in country, and that a Washington Coordinator for the SOFA will be named.

¶13. (C) Comment: McGurk notes that Zebari's description of the Iraqi negotiating team is similar, but different in key respects to outlines discussed by other interlocutors, including Mowaffak Rubaie. The Rubaie plan, which Rubaie said the Prime Minister supports, will have a top "umbrella" tier of "political leaders" including bloc leaders such as Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, to ensure the process is building consensus throughout. Rubaie also said three technical

negotiating teams will be formed under a second tier "steering group" -- which sounds similar to Zebari's outline -- to focus on the economic, diplomatic, and political spheres of a strategic framework agreement. Rubaie finally recommended that the USG plan to begin negotiations no earlier than the third week in February, and to focus in the early weeks on the broad strategic outlines of the bilateral relationship. Vice President Adil Abd al-Mahdi told McGurk and Ambassador Crocker on January 16 (septel) that the negotiating structure has been delegated to the secretariat group of the 3 plus 1, which should produce a draft in a week. All in all, while the Iraqi negotiating structure is still being developed, key interlocutors and leaders have clearly received the message that we will not do business the way the Declaration of Principles and the UNSCR renewal negotiations were handled -- when the Iraqi negotiating team was almost entirely the Prime Minister's advisory corps. End comment.

¶4. (C) Zebari said pressure needs to be maintained on PM Maliki going into the SOFA negotiations. He added, "Maliki should not be left under the impression he is indispensable," commenting that he shot down earlier in the day an idea of PM Maliki seeking \$124 million for a Special Forces Brigade to protect the IZ. Zebari emphasized, "I killed this idea." Zebari also complained about the prior dealings with the Prime Minister's staff on the Declaration of Principles, emphasizing his strong support for the USG's position that it would only negotiate with a broadly-based and representative GOI team, rather than just the PM's Office.

OUTREACH TO ARAB NEIGHBORS, NEIGHBORS CONFERENCE

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¶5. (C) Zebari is actively reaching out to Iraqi's Arab neighbors, and discussed his recent trip to Cairo and meetings with President Hosni Mubarak. Mubarak told him the situation in Iraq is improving, and encouraged more partnership on reconciliation efforts. Zebari said Mubarak promised to send a "team" to Baghdad to explore the issue of re-opening an embassy. Zebari added Mubarak is still cautious, however, given the assassination of former Egyptian envoy to Iraq Ihab al-Sharif in 2005. He said the GOE had asked for any information related to Sharif's assassination and asked if the USG had any background information. Zebari also raised the importance of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia opening their embassies.

¶6. (C) Zebari talked about the GOI's plans for a neighbor's ministerial. He told Satterfield that he received a positive response from UNAMI to set a date in the last half of February for the working groups, followed by a preparatory group meeting. This is expected to be followed by an expanded ministerial in Kuwait in April. Zebari told Satterfield the GOI is pressing to move the time up. Zebari said Turkey, Syria, Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, and Bahrain were all assured of attending the expanded ministerial in Kuwait, but envisioned problems with Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Satterfield responded it would be better to hold the expanded ministerial in Kuwait earlier than April, but at a minimum the dates for the series of neighbors' meetings should be locked in in advance of March U.S. Congressional hearings.

TURKEY

¶7. (C) Zebari highlighted to Satterfield that Turkey just sent a dipnote regarding accusations by the Turks that wounded PKK members are being treated in hospitals in Irbil. Zebari noted, "I wrote back to the Turks that the issue needs to be investigated." He added, "We do not know who they are." Satterfield talked about his meeting with the Turkish Ambassador earlier in the day where this same issue came up, commenting that more information is needed as well before the

USG will raise the issue with the KRG. The second item Satterfield raised was that President Masoud Barzani recently made a statement during the visit of Italian Foreign Minister Giovanni Vernetti that seemed to back away from GOI designation of what qualifies as a terrorist group. Zebari was unfamiliar with the statement, but said he is encouraging a political solution with Turkey rather than kinetic over the PKK issue.

IRAQI REFUGEES IN JORDAN, DE-BA'ATH LAW, IRAN

¶8. (C) S/I Satterfield pressed Zebari on the promise of \$8 million that the GOI is to provide for Iraqi refugees living in Jordan. Zebari responded he was prepared to deliver the money to the GOJ which could then, even in the same ceremony, deliver the money to the United Nations High Committee on Refugees (UNHCR). PolCouns asked Zebari whether the recent passage of the Justice and Accountability Law would impact any of his employees. Zebari responded, there is no impact on the MFA or concerns.

¶9. (C) Satterfield also told Zebari the U.S. is waiting to hear from Iran on the joint talks. Zebari commented that the GOI agreed to a date, but then the Iranians backed down. He added, "They are not in a hurry." "The best thing to do with the Iranians right now," Zebari said, "is to ignore them. That is the only thing they understand."

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